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POST-OFFICE APPROPRIATION BILL.

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SPEECH

OF

HON. MARCUS A. SMITH,

OF ARIZONA,

IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16, 1898.

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WASHINGTON.

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SPEECH  
OF  
HON. MARCUS A. SMITH.

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The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, and having under consideration the bill (H. R. 9008) making appropriations for the service of the Post-Office Department for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1899—

Mr. SMITH of Arizona said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: As general debate on this bill has taken the usual wide range, and thus given opportunity to many eloquent gentlemen to paint in living colors the unfortunate condition surrounding the people of Cuba, I deem it not inopportune to call the attention of this House and the country to the cruel and inhuman treatment which the Territories of the United States are receiving at the hands of the General Government. At the outset permit me to assert that there is no community or people on the face of the earth who feel a deeper sympathy with the suffering people of Cuba or greater indignation at the brutality of Spain than the unrepresented citizens of our Western Territories. "A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind."

Having felt the hand of oppression, we keenly feel the necessity of freedom. Having suffered from injustice, we actually hate it wherever we chance to see it. On account of what we have in our own persons felt, I do not hesitate to declare that the sincerest lovers of liberty, the most impersonal patriots on our soil to-day, are the people of Arizona. They are no strangers to republican form of government, yet one might conclude they were if their history were written only in the proceedings of Congress and its committees.

Descendants of Revolutionary heroes are there. Veterans of the triumphant army of the North in the late great war and their

children are there. Those who followed with courage the conquered banner till all save life and honor were lost are there. Of these and such as these is the matchless citizenship of Arizona composed, and far across the rolling plains and steeped cities and lofty mountain tops they stretch a congratulatory hand to everyone here who has had the humanity, courage, and patriotism to express a sentiment in favor of the freedom of Cuba peacefully if possible, but at the cannon's mouth if necessary.

But, Mr. Chairman, we have not listened with patience to your proposal to annex Hawaii, with its mongrel citizenship and sugar-trust domination, while Arizona, New Mexico, and Oklahoma, with more than half a million of American freeborn, yet enslaved, citizens are taxed without representation, denied even the right of local self-government, and, above all, denied their constitutional right to statehood. Against this we have protested, and still protest. Unavailing this protest will continue to be until other and juster men shall take your places here and fill other higher places now held by the enemies of our cause.

Twice have I passed a bill admitting Arizona to statehood through this House when the Democrats had control. My predecessor, with all the industry of his nature, aided by every ingenuity his mind or imagination could summon, barely got a statehood bill out of committee in a Republican House, and never got and never could get even a hope of its consideration in the House. He did as well and as much as any man could have done with such a House. He did as well as I have been enabled to do with the present House, or as any man could do with it. The truth is that the goldbug Republican party is opposed to the admission of any other Western State, and as long as it reigns Arizona will be left as it is, no matter who shall be sent here as Delegate. You know this as well as I do.

The Committee on Territories by a strict party vote early in the present session denied us statehood. Every Democrat present voted for statehood. Every Republican present voted against statehood.

When there was no longer a chance for victory on this line I began to press my bill for home rule in Arizona, and it met exactly the same fate. That was simply a bill to grant to Arizona



the poor right to elect certain officers named therein by vote of the people instead of having strangers, carpetbaggers, and incompetents thrust on us by any President of the United States or any of his advisers.

No point was ever made against this bill in committee or elsewhere that entitles itself to decent consideration. No objection was ever urged higher than the miserable idea of giving office to some political striker or ward heeler. I do not mean here to characterize our present officers in Arizona as such heelers, but the principle is the same, and one thing is certain, the one holding now the highest office, that of governor, used every argument and exhausted his energy in trying to defeat the home-rule bill in favor of the passage of which every single county in Arizona is almost unanimous.

Nobody opposed it except some meritless beneficiary of the present outrageous system. The people of Arizona wanted to elect their own officers. The Republican committee of this House wanted to retain Republican incumbents. The Republican incumbents wanted to stay in. They feared the people, and well they might and well they may when they or any of them come begging suffrage who have against their record this selfish fight on the just powers of the people.

I have just come from the Committee on Territories, where I have been pleading for the simple right to elect by vote of the people the men who administer our Territorial affairs. These men have no Federal functions; they have nothing to do with the administration of Federal questions. The function of these offices are purely Territorial, and the Federal Government has no right and no business to appoint or interfere in any way with them.

Mr. Chairman, we have begged, we have importuned, we have petitioned for this poor boon, but we have been put off unanswered, our importunities have been unheeded, and we, as our fathers of old with their petitions, "have been spurned with contempt from the foot of this throne."

Talk about independence! Is there any free country on earth where this would be tolerated, or any freeman on earth who would justify it? Any high-bred freeman who could look without complaint on such injustice as this would kick himself in

every waking hour and deserves the nightmare in every hour of sleep.

Prate here on other questions about patriotism, justice, and humanity if you will, but how can you justify this thing? No place this side of Russia, no man worthy to be a citizen of any country freer than Russia, can or will even attempt to justify a vote against home rule for Arizona.

Nothing but politics, mean, contemptible politics, has beaten the home-rule bill for Arizona, and politics of no better type has kept us out of the Union. The country has divided on a great financial question, and because we would not bow down at the foot of Baal's idols we were told to stay out of the Union. [Applause.] Well, we will stay out until that question is settled, and settled right. I know and you know that you will not admit a State that you can not control in favor of the single gold standard. Our people are for free silver.

They are right. They can not be cajoled, bought, or bulldozed into change of principle. They are not of the knee-bending habit, that fawning may bring thrift. We know you will not let us have two silver votes in the Senate as long as you Republicans are in power, but can you not, just out of the abundance of your sweet mercy, let us have a little taste of that "autonomy" you are talking of giving to Cuba? [Laughter.] Justice as well as charity should begin at home. Let it not for a minute be inferred that our people are against Cuba.

They glory in the valor of the insurgents and long to see freedom and victory at once perch upon the banner their valor has carried through famine, fire, and battle charge.

The heroic fortitude exhibited chains our admiration, and the insurgents' course would be fully justified if Spain had treated her a whit less ungratefully or with a whit more of wrong than the Federal Government persists in visiting on its Territories.

Mr. KING. The gentleman forgets that a good many home patriots need office in the Territories.

Mr. SMITH of Arizona. That is the whole trouble, as the gentleman from Utah well knows, having seen it at work in his own State before its admission.

Mr. Chairman, I know full well the struggle parties make for political supremacy. I appreciate a political party's unwillingness, even by just and proper measures, to advance the prospects of their political adversaries. The country has divided squarely on the money question. The East mistrusts the West. Under no promise, even if it should be made, would the Western silver Territories be admitted as States while this question remains unsettled and the Republicans hold this House.

But these considerations do not enter into the home-rule question. You could give us this without hurting your gold scheme or affecting the result of any Congressional or Presidential election. You could let us pay and distribute our own taxes through engines of our own creation without injury to your party anywhere on earth. You can not refuse us this natural right without forgetting every sense of human liberty, every idea of legal justice, every aspiration of a free soul, and descend to grovel in unjust espionage and pay a miserable Caesar's tribute to your spies out of the hard-earned money of a people who deserve your decent consideration and despise your despotism as a just man hates wrong.

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